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ABSTRACT

Five Dade County (Florida) public schools (three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school) served as clinical training centers in the Ford Foundation Clinical Supervision program. Characteristics of the program include: (1) shifting of primary responsibility for supervising internships for preservice teachers from the universities to classroom teachers who serve as clinical supervisors; (2) emphasis on selection, training, and resources for clinical supervisors; (3) a rigorous 4-week training program which precedes actual supervision of interns; and (4) extension of the internship to a full-year program that includes daily inservice training provided at the school site and observation of exemplary teaching practices. This report focuses on interns' (N=58) assessment of their clinical supervisors and the usefulness of the developmental feedback from the supervisors. The Ford interns' responses were compared to those of a control group of interns (N=81) who had a regular internship of 9-14 weeks. Findings indicate that, in general, interns' reactions to their directing teachers were very favorable, and that the interns found their developmental teachers' feedback valuable. (IAH)

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Interns' Assessment of Teachers: Perceived Usefulness of Developmental Feedback

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Interns' Assessment of Teachers: Perceived Usefulness of Developmental Feedback

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

In 1988-89, staff from the Division of Instructional/Support Personnel Training designed and developed the Ford Foundation Clinical Supervision program for Dade County Public Schools in Miami, Florida.

> Its purpose is to update the pedagogic knowledge and improve the skills of those educators who provide assistance to developing teachers in the acquisition and refinement of teaching competencies. The long range effects of such a training program should be: (1) increased quality of performance among developing teachers, (2) more effective supervision in preservice teacher education programs, (3) improved collaboration among university, district, and school-based programs for staff development, and (4) overall school improvement as a result of increased teacher performance. (DCPS, Handbook for "Teachers Helping Teachers," 1989, p. 3).

The theoretical framework of the program is based on a modification of the Cogan, Golhammer, and Krajewski models for clinical supervision (Golhammer, Anderson, & Krajewski, 1980). Its most salient characteristics are:

*The primary responsibility for supervising the internship is shifted from universities to classroom teachers who serve as clinical supervisors.

*Much greater emphasis is placed on the selection, training, and resources available to clinical supervisors.

*Initially, a vigorous screening process takes place to select promising teachers as potential clinical supervisors and four weeks of rigorous training precedes the first actual supervision of interns.

*The length of the internship is extended to one full year. There is daily inservice training provided at the school site. Regular observation of exemplary teaching practices is an integral part of the supervisory process.

Five Dade County public schools (three elementary schools, a middle school, and a senior high school) serve as clinical training centers. On a national level, there are a total of eight sites implementing various aspects of clinical supervision; these sites have been supported financially by the Ford Foundation (Meade, 1991).

Clinical Training Centers

In Dade County, clinical training centers were selected based on a number of previously specified characteristics (e.g., diverse student population in socioeconomic and academic levels). There were a number of subsequent meetings between the Superintendent of schools and the Director of the program which served to narrow the number of potential sites.

Conversations and meetings were also held with potential school-site administrators and teachers. Based on these results, four clinical training centers were established for the 1989-90 school year (in the South area of the county), and a fifth site (an innercity school) was added in the 1991-92 school year.

The schools selected reflect the socio-economic and tri-ethnic mix of the district. Their administration, faculty, and staff evidence commitment, enthusiasm, and support for the program. These characteristics were considered to be very important in the education of prospective teachers.

Clinical Supervisors

Criteria for selection of clinical supervisors at the chosen clinical training centers were very stringent (e.g., Masters degree, supervisory training/experience). Teachers were informed of these criteria and those qualified and interested submitted documentation to support their application.

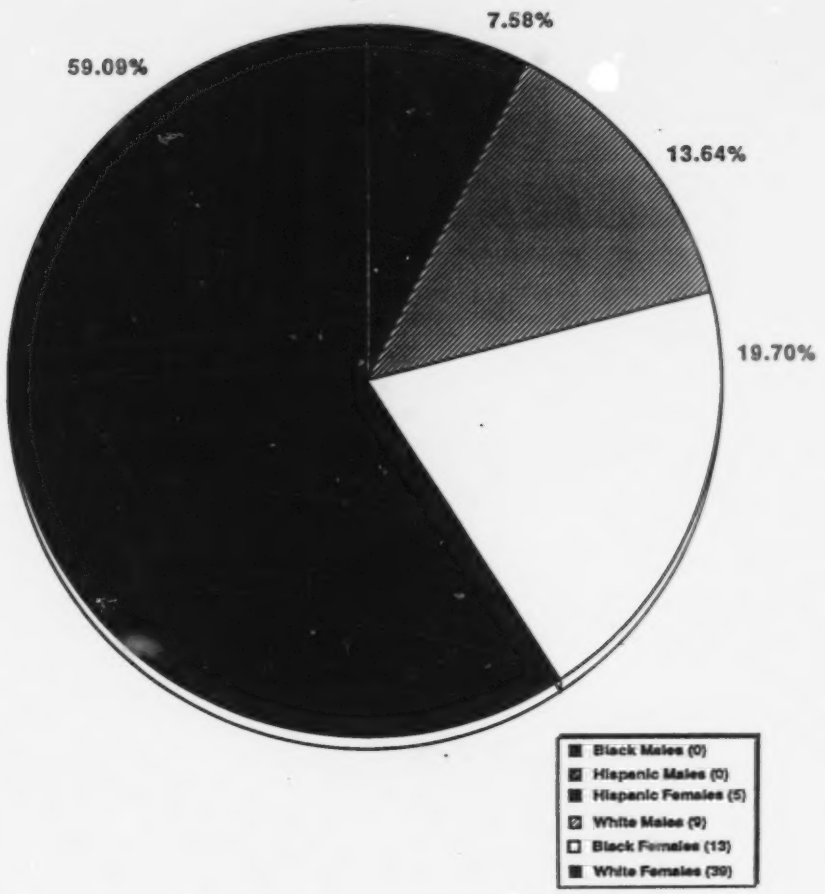
Staff from United Teachers of Dade (UTD, DCPS' union), Professional Standards, and the Clinical Supervision Program, scrutinized all relevant materials and notified Principals after the final selection was made. Principals, in turn, notified teachers.

During the summer, clinical supervisors participated in 15 days of intensive training; including workshops in clinical education, observation techniques, and supervisory skills, among other topics. Training was both theoretical and practical in nature, and it continued during the year with additional inservices and resources, such as journal subscriptions.

Nationally recognized authorities in their fields (e.g., Dr. Keith Acheson in clinical supervision) presented current trends in educational philosophy and methodology. Clinical supervisors examined the information critically, reflected, and developed alternative strategies to address some of their school priorities.

Figure 1 presents the gender and ethnic distribution of the 66 clinical supervisors trained by the Ford Foundation program during the two years of program implementation. As can be seen, most of the trained clinical supervisors are White and Black females.

Figure 1
Gender and Ethnicity
of 89-91 Ford-Trained
Clinical Supervisors



Interns

Participation in the program was available to fourth or fifth year students pursuing careers in the teaching profession from local universities. Students were required to have a G.P.A. of 3.00 and a recommendation by one university staff member.

In 1989-90, there were 17 interns from Florida International University (FIU) and 12 interns from the University of Miami (UM). In 1990-91, there were 27 FIU interns and 2 UM interns trained by the Ford Foundation.

The gender and ethnic distribution of Ford-trained interns for each year (1989-90 and 1990-91) appear in Figures 2 and 3 which follow.

Figure 2
Gender and Ethnicity
of 89-90 Ford-Trained
Interns

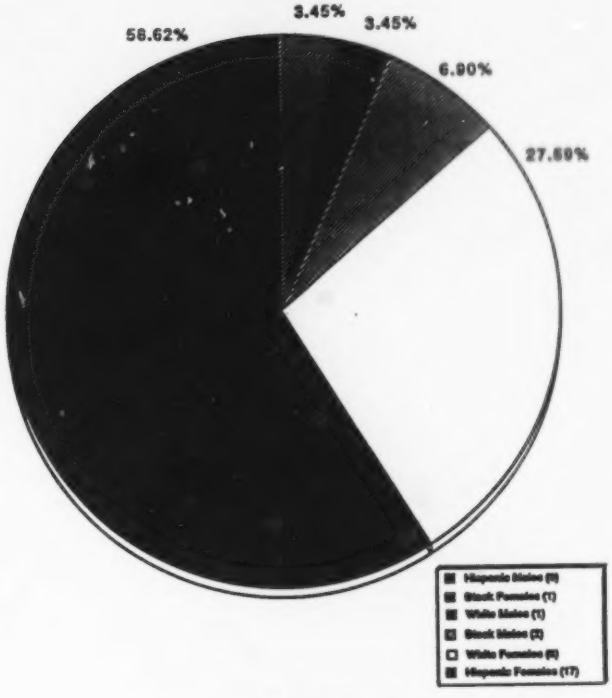
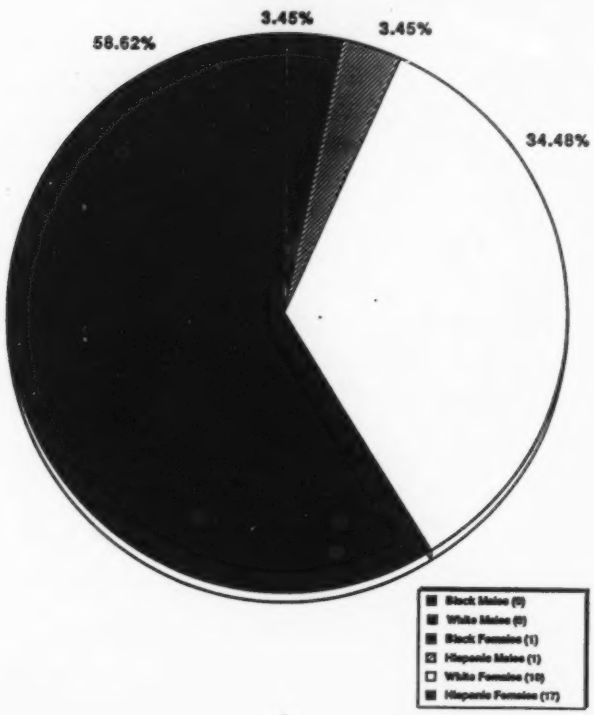


Figure 3
Gender and Ethnicity
of 90-91 Ford-Trained
Interns



As seen on Figures 2 and 3, most interns (both years) have been Hispanic and White females. There are few males or Blacks in the sample, even though program staff are actively recruiting males and Blacks.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As part of the evaluation of the Clinical Supervision Program, data have been collected each year of program implementation. Since this report focuses on interns' assessment of their clinical supervisors and the usefulness of their developmental feedback, only the Self-Report Questionnaire, End-of-Year Survey, and Follow-Up Survey will be discussed with their respective results.

Data are also available for a control group of interns (regular 9-14 weeks internship), randomly selected each year as a comparison group. A summary of the interns and their research category appear in Table 1.

Table 1

Number of participants by research group

Research category	Number 1989-90	1990-91
FIFT Ford-trained intern with Ford-trained clinical supervisor	29	29
CICT Control intern with control directing teacher	34	47

Instruments and Results

Self-Report Questionnaire

This form, a combination of multiple-choice and open-ended questions, assesses interns' perceptions of the information and assistance they received during the previous month.

In 1989-90, Ford-trained interns with Ford-trained clinical supervisors (FIFT) completed the questionnaire in the spring.

In 1990-91, Ford-trained interns (FIFT) completed two Self-Report Questionnaires, one in the winter and one in the spring. Control interns completed one Self-Report Questionnaire in the spring.

Return rates were very good across years and types of interns. In 1989-90, 29 FIFT interns (100%) returned completed surveys; in 1990-91, 21 FIFT interns (72%) in winter, and 29 FIFT interns (100%) in spring, along with 46 CICT interns (98%) returned completed surveys.

In the questionnaire, interns were asked to discuss their interactions with their directing teachers. Almost all interns (across research groups and years) stated that their directing teacher personally cared about them (93%-97% for FIFT interns and 91% for CICT interns).

Interns also indicated that the feedback they received from their directing teachers was generally relevant or extremely relevant to their needs, concerns, or questions (86%-97% for FIFT interns and 100% for CICT interns). The majority of interns indicated that there was a lot or a maximum amount of continuity between successive feedback conferences (67%-90% for FIFT interns and 91% for CICT interns).

On an open-ended question, sampled interns also reported that they reviewed the feedback they received and tried to use it. Most interns also wrote that they would not change anything about the conferring process, indicating satisfaction with both the process and results.

End-of-Year Survey

This instrument, an objective Likert-type scale, assessed interns' attitudes toward their directing teacher. In 1989-90, only FIFT interns were asked to complete the survey; in 1990-91, FIFT and CICT interns were asked to complete the survey.

Return rates were very good across years and types of interns. In 1989-90, 29 interns (100%) returned completed surveys; in 1990, 29 FIFT interns (100%) and 33 CICT interns (70%) returned completed surveys.

In the first section, interns were asked to rate the importance of certain factors in improving their teaching performance. The scale ranged from "totally unimportant" (1) to "very important" (5) and mean scores and standard deviations were computed.

Results on the importance of the directing teacher were very positive, as reflected in high mean scores (with a range from 4.70 to 4.93) and small standard deviations (with a range from .28 to .77). Table 2 presents this information for 1989-90 and 1990-91 interns.

Table 2

Results of the importance of selected End-of-Year Survey items

Item	% Very Important	Mean Rating	Standard Deviation
Quality of relationship with directing teacher			
1989-90 FIFT	93%	4.93	.28
1990-91 FIFT	80%	4.70	.71
1990-91 CICT	91%	4.88	.42
Feedback from directing teacher			
1989-90 FIFT	90%	4.79	.77
1990-91 FIFT	NA		
1990-91 CICT	NA		
Knowledge/enthusiasm of directing teacher			
1989-90 FIFT	86%	4.86	.35
1990-91 FIFT	79%	4.66	.77
1990-91 CICT	79%	4.73	.63
Assistance/support of directing teacher			
1989-90 FIFT	93%	4.93	.26
1990-91 FIFT	80%	4.70	.71
1990-91 CICT	91%	4.90	.42

As can be seen, ratings were high, indicating that interns' perceptions on the impact of directing teachers were very positive. FIFT interns in 1989-90 showed higher ratings than the other groups in 1990-91.

Interns were also asked to provide an overall rating to various aspects of their internship experience. Again, a Likert-type scale was used with ratings which varied from "totally inadequate" (1) to "exceptional" (5); means and standard deviations were also computed. Table 3 presents information on selected items which provide evaluative data on the directing teacher. As shown in Table 3, responses were also very positive across years and types of interns.

Table 3

Evaluative ratings of selected End-of-Year items

Item	% Exceptional or Very Adequate	Mean Rating	Standard Deviation
Information from directing teacher			
1989-90 FIFT	NA		
1990-91 FIFT	86%	4.41	.91
1990-91 CICT	82%	4.34	.90
Quality of relationship with directing teacher			
1989-90 FIFT	91%	4.78	.69
1990-91 FIFT	89%	4.54	.79
1990-91 CICT	94%	4.64	.70

Again, these results reflect very favorable perceptions of directing teachers' feedback. T-tests conducted on mean item scores between FIFT and CICT interns in 1990-91 revealed no significant differences.

An additional set of items for 1989-90 FIFT interns asked them to reflect on other aspects of the feedback received from their directing teachers. Interns answered these items by choosing "yes, no, or not sure."

Results showed that 1989-90 FIFT interns stated that the feedback they had received from their directing teacher "caused them to really have to think," (90% interns said "yes"). They also stated that feedback was "practical in nature," (97% interns said "yes").

Almost all interns (97%) also stated that they would not have done as well in their student teaching without the feedback received from their directing teacher. These results

corroborate previous findings which were also favorable.

Follow-Up Surveys

Follow-up Surveys were sent to FIFT and CICT interns hired by the school system during the first semester of their first year and second year of teaching (for 1989-90 interns). Information on intern status was gathered from the system's personnel computer file.

Only those interns with a location number (a school site) were sent Follow-Up Surveys. Table 4 presents the number of interns hired by the school system and their return rate.

Table 4

Number of interns hired and return rate

Type of Intern	Initial n	No. & % Hired	No. & % of Return 1990-91	1991-92
1989-90 FIFT	29	23,79%	19,83%	12 of 15, 80%
1989-90 CICT	34	17,50%	6,35%	8 of 12, 67%
1990-91 FIFT	29	25,86%	NA	17,68%
1990-91 CICT	47	20,42%	NA	14,70%

Note. The number of interns hired is greater for FIFT interns because the district makes a concerted effort to hire those interns who have a full-year internship experience.

Although sample sizes are small, especially if compared to the original n counts, Follow-Up Survey results provide useful information regarding interns' perceptions of their directing teachers' developmental feedback. It is also important to note that findings reflect reactions to the internship program a year and two years (for 1989-90 interns) after the program.

The Follow-Up Survey is also a Likert-type scale with ratings ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). Means and standard deviations were also computed for 1990-91.

Table 5 presents the results of interns' ratings on two items which deal with the directing teacher. Findings are for the most part positive; 1989-90 control interns in 1992 have the lowest ratings on each of the items.

Table 5

Responses on selected Follow-Up Survey items

Item	% Agree or Strongly Agree FIFT	% Agree or Strongly Agree CICT	Mean & SD FIFT	Mean & SD CICT
The feedback I received from my directing teacher was very helpful				
1989-90 in 1991	95%	34%	NA	NA
1989-90 in 1992	83%	50%	4.33 1.15	3.38 1.68
1990-91 in 1992	76%	100%	4.18 1.47	4.71 .47
Relationship with directing teacher enhanced professional development				
1989-90 in 1991	95%	34%	NA	NA
1989-90 in 1992	92%	38%	4.50 1.17	2.88 1.64
1990-91 in 1992	76%	93%	4.18 1.47	4.64 0.63

Four t-tests were run between FIFT and CICT interns' mean item scores. There was a statistically significant difference between 1989-90 interns' mean scores in 1992 (t (18) = 2.60, p = .02), with FIFT interns reflecting higher positive ratings than CICT interns on the impact of the directing teacher in enhancing their professional development.

This is reflective of the pattern of results found with other instruments. FIFT interns from 1989-90 showed very positive reactions to their directing teachers; these results are still evident two years after their participation in the program.

Informal interviews

Program and evaluation staff have always considered interns' reactions to the program to be extremely important. Interns' perceptions of the program, their relationship with their directing teachers, and their internship experiences were also assessed through formal and informal meetings and interviews.

Concerns which interns had (e.g., scheduling difficulties with university requirements) were

addressed promptly and efficiently by program staff. Certain issues continue to demand further consideration (e.g., financial support for interns); but staff are committed to finding adequate solutions.

In general, findings from interviews have substantiated survey results. Interns express very favorable opinions toward their internship experiences and their relationship with their supervising teachers.

On numerous occasions, they have expressed admiration and gratitude toward their supervising teachers, considering them to be exceptional role models. Many still maintain a close relationship with their directing teacher, two years after their internship program.

In cases where there had been negative feelings expressed toward directing teachers, program staff took action to remedy the situations. Difficulties encountered by control interns have also provided data to recommend changes in teacher-intern relations and the internship experience (Ariza-Menendez, 1992, pending publication).

DISCUSSION

Throughout the two years of implementation, interns have played a very active role in the Ford Foundation Clinical Supervision program. Their input, feedback, and recommendations have helped shape the program and the internship experience.

The face-to-face collegial relationship between the clinical supervisor and intern has nurtured mutual professional and personal growth (Acheson & Gall, 1987). Directing teachers' reactions to their interns' impact substantiate their reciprocal benefits (Ariza-Menendez, 1992, pending publication).

In general, interns' reactions to their directing teachers were very favorable as evident in the results examined here. Findings from Self-Report Questionnaires, End-of-Year Surveys, Follow-Up Surveys, and interviews substantiate the value that interns place on their directing teachers' developmental feedback.

The quantity and depth of developmental information provided to interns, especially Ford-trained interns, represents a major innovation in preservice education. In Dade County's Ford Foundation Clinical Supervision Program, formal feedback conferences between interns and directing teachers take place daily.

The framework for the clinical supervision cycle makes each Ford-trained intern an active participant in critically analyzing, evaluating, and improving (if needed) his/her performance. These are skills highly advocated by education reform reports (Carnegie Forum, 1986; Green, 1987).

On the Daily Conference Logs, interns can see their strengths and weaknesses, and their improvement throughout their year-long internship. Specific teaching behaviors are observed and recorded on Florida Intern Teaching Inventory (FITI) forms.

Furthermore, both Ford-trained and control interns are observed with the Teaching Assessment Development System (TADS) forms as part of the evaluation of the Clinical Supervision Program. This observation familiarized interns with the district-mandated evaluation form and provided feedback on classroom performance. These data help interns perfect their teaching strategies and enhance their professional development. They provide useful standards for subsequent growth.

The lack of major significant differences between Ford-trained and control interns' reactions to their directing teachers may be due to administrative changes which took place the second year of implementation of the clinical supervision program. The highly positive and consistent results from 1989-90 Ford-trained interns appears to support this conclusion. A decrease in favorable responses from 1989-90 to 1990-91 Ford-trained interns also seem to suggest that program changes could have affected interns' reactions.

Nevertheless, these data are extremely valuable to the district as they provide information on important issues and aspects of prospective teachers' education programs. From a managerial perspective, they also represent an initial attempt to involve interns in an appraisal system of their directing teachers.

In line with Bernardin's (1986) list of potential advantages of subordinate appraisals, interns' evaluations of their directing teachers:

1. Provide useful feedback to program and district staff.
2. Reinforce good directing teachers' behaviors.
3. Enhance interns' feelings that they have a voice in decision making.
4. Facilitate needed group changes.
5. Foster greater attention to interns' needs.
6. Enhance the recruitment of other well-qualified interns.

These benefits have already been experienced in the implementation of the 1991-92 clinical supervision program, as data discussed here have been used to develop program improvements and foster greater intern participation. Additional data currently being analyzed may document some of these advantages.

Other school districts may be able to implement some aspects of the clinical supervision program, such as the clinical education process. Evaluation instruments and results may also be useful, along with several program conclusions generated by the data gathered.

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